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ABSTRACT

This paper addresses the need for having a specialist in vocational guidance who knows what needs to be done to implement and improve vocational guidance services. The person who fills the role of vocational guidance specialist must be aware of the potential roles that each group within the educational system can play in fostering needed guidance services, and must serve as a catalyst for bringing these resources together into a viable program. To do this, the author posits that the specialist must have an in-depth and practical understanding of the educational system, the world of work, the individual and the process of vocational development, and procedures for bringing people together in a common effort. For purposes of providing insight into the breadth and level of this person's understanding, the author provides a comprehensive description of relevant competencies. (SJL)

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VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE PERSONNEL

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VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE PERSONNEL

The purpose of providing guidance services is to assure to each individual, assistance in making appropriate educational, vocational, and personal decisions. It is the responsibility of the vocational guidance specialist to assure that relevant learning experiences do exist and are available which lead to the making of appropriate decisions.

If one is to assure that such experiences do become available, one must first be aware of the kinds of experiences that should exist and then be able to design strategies for influencing decision makers to actually make such experiences available. For the purposes of this paper, this role is described as that of a vocational guidance specialist.

In describing the role of a vocational guidance specialist, it is not intended to imply that the person in each school (or college) who has these competencies would be labeled as the "Vocational Guidance Specialist." Such a person may already be labeled as counselor, principal, vocational education coordinator, director of guidance, or other. Nor is it assumed that the same competencies are appropriate to all guidance personnel. However, it is imperative that there be a person available who knows what needs to be done in vocational guidance and who can design procedures for getting it done. Furthermore, the needs will be met only if the people in education, and others who are not part of the educational structure, can be persuaded to work together to provide the necessary support for the program.

Within the educational system, the board members, the administrators, the guidance personnel, the teachers, other staff, and the students, all have a responsibility to assist in developing and providing guidance services. Industry, governmental and private agencies are also concerned that the services be provided and they must, (and often do) accept a responsibility for providing supplementary resources for guidance services.

The person(s) who fills the role of vocational guidance specialist must be aware of the potential roles that each of these groups could play in fostering the needed guidance service and must serve as a catalyst for bringing these resources together into a viable program. To do this, the vocational guidance specialist must have an in-depth understanding of the educational system, of the world of work, of the individual and the process of vocational development and of procedures for bringing people together into a common effort.

Expressed in another manner, if a school or college is to develop an effective program of vocational guidance, it would be appropriate to seek a person to direct it who would have an in-depth and practical understanding of the following:

A The process of vocational development and vocational decision making.

B The labor market as it applies to job opportunities and vocational development.

C The educational system as it applies to vocational development and job entry.

D The process of providing to youth and to adults, in a convenient and systematic manner, information on jobs, occupations, careers and labor trends and their interdependency.

E Student assessment procedures and values as they relate to the vocational decision-making process.

F The counseling process as it relates to vocational decision making.

G The value and role of consultation as a means of articulating guidance services with other agencies.

H The process of planning and coordinating effort to bring together the necessary resources for an effective guidance program.

I The process of evaluating guidance services in whole or in part.

J The role and responsibility of a person as a member of the guidance profession.

For purposes of further clarification, it must be acknowledged that, to some extent, all guidance personnel, whether they be at the para-professional, the professional, or the administrative levels, have some of these kinds of knowledge and understanding.

While it may be difficult to find the ideal person for some guidance roles, it is well to recognize that there are important areas of competence that should be sought which are related to the particular role to be filled.

Indeed, the assumption underlying the development of this paper is that individuals can and will progress from one level of competency to another. The actual formalization of competencies should make the pattern of transition from one occupational role to another more visible and possible.

Related Competencies

For purposes of gaining insight into the breadth and level of a person's understanding of the above subjects, a description of relevant competencies is provided.

A An understanding of the process of vocational development and vocational decision making is demonstrated by the ability to:

1 Identify the knowledges of aptitudes, potentialities, and temperamental characteristics and the skills necessary for a person to possess to successfully make vocational decisions.

2 Describe how economic and geographic characteristics influence the choice of a vocation and how the impact of environment, such as migrant labor camps, slum neighborhood or ethnic ghettos, facilitate and/or hinder selection of, and entry into an occupation or training for an occupation.

3 Describe how physical, intellectual, sexual, religious, national, racial, or familial characteristics of a person facilitate or hinder selection of and entry into an occupation or preparation for an occupation.

4 Describe how business, industry, labor unions, the military, and other governmental and non-governmental agencies facilitate and/or hinder selection of and entry into an occupation or preparation for an occupation.

5 Describe ways in which the educational system (including both private and public education) helps and/or hinders selection of and entry into, or preparation for entry into, a vocation.

6 Describe how work experience provides opportunities for career choice and development.

7 Demonstrate an understanding of the personal and social forces which necessitate career transition.

B An understanding of the labor market as it applies to job opportunities and vocational development is demonstrated by the ability to:

1 Describe the purposes and procedures of the major systems of classification of occupations.

2 Acquire from appropriate institutions and agencies, and interpret data, information, and materials which describe labor market, occupational, and industrial trends.

3 Conduct job analysis and write job and occupational descriptions at a reading level appropriate to the clients served.

4 Describe basic legal requirements and/or policies for entry into apprenticeship, work experience, manpower programs and union membership.

5 Describe factors in the job subculture which relate to job satisfaction.

6 Describe appropriate strategies for entry into various segments of the work force.

7 Demonstrate types of qualifications considered important by employers.

8 Relate individual occupations to clusters of occupations and to job ladders.

C An understanding of the educational system as it applies to vocational development and job entry is demonstrated by the ability to:

1 Describe the types of program offerings of correspondence schools, extension, colleges and universities, private schools, and public schools, R.O.P.s, community colleges, Department of Labor programs and the philosophical basis for the policies and practices which affect enrollment in their programs.

2 Demonstrate a basic understanding of general policies and practices of awarding scholarships, grants, loans, and public agency benefits (vocational rehabilitation, V.A., California vocational education grants, etc.) and private agency benefits.

3 Demonstrate the academic skills prerequisite to specific job placement or training.

4 Assist students in course selection, scheduling, and other aspects of educational advisement as it applies to vocational preparation.

5 Describe how the degree of public education emphasis on vocational education has been altered by legislative enactments.

D An understanding of the process of providing to youth and adults, in a convenient and systematic manner, information on jobs, occupations, careers and labor trends and their interdependency, is demonstrated by the ability to:

1 Develop a procedure for economical and effective acquisition, organization and dissemination of labor market and occupational information.

2 Plan and conduct student career conferences.

3 Provide reliable and current information on the relationship, or lack of relationship, between physical, intellectual, racial or national characteristics, and entry into, and success in specific occupations.

4 Convey to educators, students, parents, and others, an understanding of the present role and of the unfulfilled potential of education, and of ways and means that youth and adults can best use present educational resources to prepare for employment and success in an occupation.

5 Provide information on the types of agencies within the community which provide vocational guidance services.

6 Maintain and disseminate in a systematic manner, decision-making information on the purposes and the offerings, the costs and the characteristics of schools, colleges and other training agencies and their programs.

7 Make available audio visual presentation to groups so that parents and others acquire an accurate understanding of the kinds of educational and career opportunities which are available.

8 Develop extra curricular vocational related clubs and activities to enrich the vocational awareness of pupils.

9 Locate and acquire useful but free occupational information.

E An understanding of student assessment procedures and the values they have to the vocational decision making process can be demonstrated by the ability to:

1 Demonstrate to students, parents and teachers, the value and use of several commonly accepted assessment procedures such as individual and group testing, observation, interviewing, case study and self study.

2 Demonstrate the cultural and statistical biases of tests and other evaluation procedures.

3 Teach youth and adults methods of self-appraisal in regard to vocational and educational choice and the advantages and risk involved in each method.

4 Relate test scores to individual occupations and explain the theoretical rationale for the relationship.

5 Demonstrate procedures for assessing the career needs of the exceptional child or adult.

F An understanding of the counseling process as it relates to vocational decision making may be demonstrated by the ability to:

1 Establish effective relationships with students and the use of suitable counseling and interviewing technics.

2 Provide career counseling, occupational counseling, and job counseling, and to assure that both counselor and client recognize the significant differences between the objectives.

3 Interpret appraisal data to counselees in terms that have meaning to the counselee who is involved in vocational planning and decision making.

4 Work directly with individuals and small groups for the purpose of discussing and clarifying concerns in the area of vocational decision making.

5 Hold exit interviews with students for the purpose of assisting the student to succeed in his choice and to evaluate the effectiveness of the educational program in meeting the students' needs.

6 Assist each student in accepting personal responsibility for his planning and the consequences of his planning.

7 Help youth and adults evaluate their own aptitudes, abilities, and values and to understand the relationship between these characteristics and career choices.

8 Help youth and adults develop probability statements regarding expected educational and vocational achievement.

9 Help students evaluate various training alternatives and to consider the interrelatedness of one's personal identity with that of the occupational role.

G An understanding of the value and role of consultation as a means of articulating guidance services with other agencies can be demonstrated by the ability to:

1 Confer in an informative manner with teachers, school administrators, curriculum specialists, parents and others, regarding the nature, mission and goals of vocational education, the career education movement and the guidance process.

2 Confer with school and community groups for the purpose of encouraging and facilitating the development of a more personalized educational system.

3 Help classroom teachers identify and emphasize the career implications of their instructional content.

4 Help classroom teachers devise, formulate and execute action plans for infusing career information into their lesson plans at each level.

5 Help representatives of labor, business, social, religious and governmental groups become directly involved in the guidance process.

6 Assist individuals and groups to develop strategies for overcoming unnecessary barriers to career development.

7 Assist people to develop and implement strategies for achieving educational and career objectives.

8 Assist educational decision makers and others regarding the type of need for data processing services to process student records, to assist students with personal assessment, to provide students with career and educational planning information, and to do follow-up of studies related to the guidance services role.

9 Confer with labor and management regarding the effect of restrictive employment practices and to help develop alternative procedures.

10 Confer with instructors and curriculum specialists regarding alternative instructional procedures for students who are not succeeding in the regular vocational programs.

11 Confer with instructors, curriculum specialists, administrators, and others, to develop effective prevocational policies and programs.

12 Confer as resource person to legislators and others regarding the implications of legislation on the guidance process.

13 Communicate career guidance needs (both educational and vocational) of students to curriculum experts and educational decision makers in ways that demonstrate the economic feasibility for making needed changes in curriculum offerings to provide essential experiences to youth and adults.

H An understanding of the process of planning and coordinating effort to bring together the necessary resources for an effective guidance program can be demonstrated by the ability to:

1 Design a system for providing the necessary guidance and counseling services for assisting an individual to develop self-awareness, establishing a realistic self-concept, developing realistic educational goals, and for helping individuals evaluate their progress toward attaining their objectives.

2 Define clearly the roles of clerical, para-professional, instructional and guidance personnel in the guidance process.

3 Develop a realistic budget and stated objectives of the guidance services.

4 Communicate regarding the roles of the people involved in the guidance process to those individuals who should be involved in some manner in the guidance process.

5 Establish and maintain effective working relationships with vocational teachers, staff, parents, etc.

6 Cooperate with local coordinators of vocational education, to identify, train, and supervise support personnel and evaluate the effectiveness of the training and the personnel.

7 Establish contact with existing social institutions and agencies within the community (for example, religious groups, social service agencies, training agencies, service clubs, fraternal organizations, recreational agencies) for the purpose of supplementing and/or coordinating effort in providing information services and support in the vocational development of students.

8 Work cooperatively with work experience and vocational coordinators in the districts, and with educational and community based service agencies to provide continuing guidance services to in-school and out-of-school youth and adults in the community.

9 Work cooperatively with work experience and vocational coordinators and the public employment service to implement a placement program which includes instruction in resume development, interview procedures, and job seeking skills for students and ex-students.

10 Design, organize, implement, and evaluate a pre and post testing program.

11 Plan and implement an in-service training program for teachers on career education and vocational guidance.

12 Organize and maintain accurate student record files.

I An understanding of the process of evaluating guidance services in whole or in part can be demonstrated by the ability to:

1 Write guidance program goals and objectives in a manner which is consistent with the requirement for later evaluation.

2 Identify and phrase problems in research fashion, review the literature as appropriate, initiate research and write up findings in a manner appropriate to resolution of the problem.

3 Develop data which describe how well the students are reaching their objectives and how well the guidance personnel are meeting the objectives of the guidance services.

4 Develop and describe procedures as to how students and guidance personnel can more effectively achieve their objectives.

J An understanding of the role and responsibility of a person as a member of the guidance profession is demonstrated by the ability to:

1 Function in an ethical and legal manner in the guidance profession.

2 Provide workable definitions of guidance and of counseling which recognize counseling and guidance as professional roles but also as activities of many people who may or may not be identified as professionals in this field.

3 Prepare a resume, apply for a position, interview and gain employment in a position for which the candidate is qualified.

4 Provide for referral of clients to other resources when the needs of the client are outside the competencies, resources, or responsibilities of the guidance person involved.